

# PEOPLE & THINGS

**T**HAT remarkable Scot, Air Chief Marshal Sir William Elliot, who has been chairman of the British Joint Services Mission in Washington for nearly three tough years, will be coming home at the end of the month. At present he is on leave in New York and a few days ago he had a medical check-up at the hands of one of the foremost specialists in America who pronounced him 100 per cent. fit. This will be good news to all those friends who were worried when he worked himself to a standstill early last year.

In view of his great experience of N.A.T.O. problems he would be an obvious successor to Lord Ismay when he retires in the autumn as Secretary-General of N.A.T.O. But there may be other plans for "Bill" Elliot. He is one of the ablest and most popular envoys to have represented us abroad since the war, and he possesses that most precious of diplomatic attributes — enough charm to conceal his toughness and intelligence. He is the youngest fifty-nine I know, and it would be a loss to the country if he were seduced away from public service by industry or the City.

## French Impressionists

**T**WO weeks ago I raised the possibility of a loan exhibition of Impressionist pictures from the Musée du Jeu de Paume. The many readers who expressed interest in this idea will be delighted to learn of the admirable despatch with which the Arts Council has persuaded the French Government to lend a group of about thirty important pictures for an exhibition which is to be opened at the Tate Gallery towards the end of April. The negotiations were carried through, I understand, by Sir Kenneth Clark, who is endowed, to a degree rare in an Englishman, with the quality which the French so curiously describe as "le standing Parisien."

I was glad, too, to hear that the exhibition will give some idea of the depth to which French life was penetrated by these great painters. There are few aspects of the period between 1860 and 1900 which could not be reconstructed from their work; and at the Tate exhibition there will be not only the portraits of Clemenceau and Mallarmé, but also such monumental evocations as Monet's "Women in a Garden," which, once seen, fill the imagination like scenes from some great unwritten novel.

## Extravaganza

**T**HE gigantic fête devised by Mr. Felix Harbord for the inauguration of the Matarazzo Institute at Sao Paulo, Brazil, is now a thing of the glamorous past.

The speeches and the inaugural Mass were barely over before the representatives of industry sat down, in their day-suits of decorous blue, at tables strewn with a mile and a half of rare orchids; the Chilean vintages flowed, and the giant melons and heaped mangoes set a note of exotic plenty.

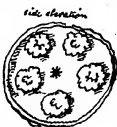
As night fell, the factory-workers' *tableaux-vivants* gave place to more primitive amusements. Painted Indians, undeterred by a fortnight's bus-ride from Bahia, wreathed their artificial roses with glittering tinsel and bore them aloft on tall poles. Papier-mâché bulls' heads played an evocative part in the dances which followed, and as the fireworks soared into the night sky a sprinkling of

## By ATTICUS

Bourbon-Braganzas joined with the hundreds of delicious darkies in acclaiming the generosity and high social sense of their host, Count Francisco Matarazzo, jr., whose father had set sail from Italy in 1881 with nothing in the world but a fibre suitcase, a stone coat-of-arms, and a dinner-suit.

## Not on Exhibition

**T**HE Augustus John exhibition at Burlington House is a very wonderful affair but, since I was not invited to loan my own John



back view

Del: Augustus John, O.M.

drawing, it cannot claim to be comprehensive. The history of the pen-and-ink original I reproduce here is as follows. Before Jonathan Cape published John's autobiography some two years ago I tried in vain to persuade him not to call it "Chiaroscuro" on the grounds that the general public would not be able to pronounce the word. He was adamant and, perhaps out of pique, I then changed my ground and queried the accuracy of a passage in the proofs in which he described a fish he once found in France that he said had a propeller instead of a tail.

## Loligo\* Johanniensis

**B**Y return of post I received a sharp rebuke, the drawing, and the following Linnean details: "The protuberances marked were sunk within the outer rim at a depth of about 2½ inches. When in action these were expanded, thrust forward, contracted and withdrawn with the regularity of clockwork. The aperture in the centre, opening and shutting in alternation with the above mechanism, contributed a repetitive expulsion of what might have been compressed air, accompanied by a light popping sound. The main body of the creature was encased in a rubber-like substance and was very slippery and quite featureless."

Surely this makes the coelacanth look pretty small fry!

\* A squid.

## United (B.R.) Kingdom

**M**OST British advertising in American magazines is mendacious and vulgar. We are presented as a nation of Beefeeders and Jolly Mine Hosts living in Chilham making tweeds and tonic water. Occasionally we Change the Guards or dance round a May-

pole. All this goes under the heading of "The New Elizabethan Age." British Railways are by far the worst offenders, and I cannot conceive of any private enterprise passing some of their advertising copy. To make matters worse, a Gremlin seems to have got into their latest effusion (paid for by you and me) in "The New Yorker."

Inviting Americans to "nine days of unlimited rail travel for £8. Above facilities not obtainable in Britain" (Why not, pray?) the reader is exhorted to "make the most of your holidays in Britain, Scotland, Cornwall, Wales."

## After the Ball is Over

**T**HIS is the last week of one of London's most famous restaurants. Frascati's closes its doors for ever on Saturday night with a farewell dinner open to all. For the last time the balloons will burst against the sharp gilt cornices and coloured streamers will soar to their last resting places among the Victorian baroque crenellations. The last of a billion champagne corks will fly and the last girl's shoe will (I hope) be filled with Ouida's "amber fluid." And then the last fairy room in London will be given over to the spiders and to the ghosts of the rakes and their sweethearts of the Gay Nineties until the spectral strains of gypsy violins are forever silenced by the pneumatic drills. And then the seventy-year party will be really over.

They say it's going to be headquarters for one of the football pools. Good show!

## Spiritual Welfare

**A**MONG the items from Lord Derby's library which are to be sold at Christie's on Tuesday is one which sheds a curious light on military life in the fourteenth century.

This is the Roll of Arms containing the names and stations of those who fought under Edward III at the siege of Calais in 1347. The Prince of Wales, for example, was attended by eleven bannerets, 10½ knights, 264 esquires, 304 horse-borne archers and 549 foot-soldiers of various kinds. (Field-Marshal Montgomery makes do with fifty all ranks in the field.)

In the ancillary grades the disproportion is even more striking to a twentieth-century eye. One surgeon to 1,334 men may have been as much as the soldiers would tolerate in the dark ages of medical science; but it seems unfair to have balanced the solitary chaplain with twenty-six vintners.

## Hush!

**I**T seems to be common knowledge in the Middle East that the 16th Independent Parachute Brigade Group will be back in England by early June.

If it was intended to keep the date of this movement of troops secret, greater care should have been exercised in the bulk purchase of champagne for their farewell party in the Stadium Club in Moascar Garrison. The exhaustion of the champagne reserves of Cyprus by a "Pur chasing Mission," which has assembled 600 bottles at about ten shillings a bottle wholesale, was bound to cause comment and here though with only the authority of the bazaars to back it, it is.

## Foreign News

**T**HEY are saying in Washington that President Eisenhower is suffering from "delusions of adequacy."